HEZEKIAH'S LIFE

FIFTEEN YEARS OF

224.1011
D748

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

D75

The Added Years of Hezekiah's Life

An Inquiry into the Significance of this Period for Isaiah Criticism

---

By Benjamin Reno Downer, Th.D.

Kansas City, Kans.

O T. Isaiah
Hezekiah
+

3 copies.

Reprinted from Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. LXXX, Nos. 318-19
April-July, 1923

LIBRARY
CENTRAL BAPTIST SEMINARY
KANSAS CITY 2, KANSAS

224.1011
D748

THE ADDED YEARS OF HEZEKIAH'S LIFE

An Inquiry into the Significance of this Period for Isaiah Criticism

BY BENJAMIN RENO DOWNER, TH.D.

KANSAS CITY, KANS.

ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT.

Foreword. 3
Chapter I. The Chronological Difficulty. 4
Chapter II. Glimpses Into an Unexplored Period. 14
Chapter III. Idolatry and the Conqueror From the East. 24
Chapter IV. The Servant of Jehovah and Salvation for Scattered Israel and the Nations. 36
Chapter V. The Question of Fulfillment. 47

FOREWORD.

THE interpretation of the book of Isaiah presented in the following pages is an attempt to bring into somewhat of a system views, some of which have been tentatively held by the author for a number of years in his teaching, but the proper correlation of which had not been satisfactorily worked out. In common doubtless with many other students of Old Testament times, he has felt keenly a few of the objections which have been urged against the unity of the book, and yet has turned with increasing disappointment from critical hypotheses which have resulted in the disintegration of one of the noblest specimens of sacred literature. The historical background which is proposed for the separate discourses may be plausible enough in each case, but a feeling of helplessness results as we try repeatedly to shift the scene from age to age in a continuous exposition. To those who have had this experience, and who believe that here we have no collection of oracles from different centuries and various unknown writers, a new endeavor to solve some of the problems may not seem superfluous. No claim is

N10925

made that a solution has been found which is free from difficulties. Some have been anticipated and dealt with in the discussion. Others probably exist which have escaped the attention of the author. Those who come to the subject with opinions already formed as to the exact age when certain religious ideas made their appearance in prophetic teaching will naturally object to some of the conclusions. No consideration is asked for the views here presented beyond a sympathetic study of the messages of Isaiah in the light of the events and experiences which it is contended are the historical background out of which they arose. If they shall become more luminous, and cumbered with fewer difficulties, it will be felt that some advance has been made toward a better understanding of the book and an easier defense of its unity.

Frequent reference has been made for the history of the time to the standard work of Rogers, *A History of Babylonia and Assyria,* in two volumes, sixth edition, revised and enlarged (1915). For brevity these have been indicated simply by the initial, together with volume and page, thus, R II 352. Those who care to look further into the inscriptions will find them in the two series of small volumes entitled *Records of the Past.* The translation of the Taylor Prism, by Rogers, may be consulted in Vol. VI of the New Series, pp. 80-101; that of the Bellino Cylinder, by Talbot, in the First Series, Vol. I, pp. 23-32; while the Cylinder of Cyrus, so far as its broken condition permitted, has been translated by Sayce in Vol. V of the New Series, pp. 164-168.

On a subject with such voluminous literature as the study of Isaiah, it is perhaps impossible to say whether much originality has been attained. The writer is, however, responsible for the opinions advanced, and he has not intentionally borrowed from anyone without giving proper credit.

I. The Chronological Difficulty.

It is not the purpose of this opening chapter to set forth any intricate solution of the chronological puzzle presented by the dates of Hezekiah's reign. The aim is

rather to propose one which is plausible and natural, and which at the same time gives new meaning to certain events of the king's life, and also furnishes a true historical background for the period we are to study.

Two dates have come to be regarded as practically fixed by Assyrian records. One is the fall of Samaria, which took place in 722 B. C., and the other Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine, which belongs to the year 701. Now the first of these is, in 2 Ki 18:10, said to have happened in the sixth year of Hezekiah, while the second is in v.13 of the same chapter assigned to his fourteenth year. This is not, however, the greatest difficulty. We may pass it by for the present, as several more or less reasonable explanations have been offered. A more serious one grows out of the fact that we seem compelled to place the invasion which desolated Judah toward the very end of Hezekiah's twenty-nine years reign. It is difficult to harmonize this with the picture given us in the Scripture narratives. The impression produced by the reading of these is that the king's reign ended prosperously and was attended by much that gave it peculiar glory. But while we do not forget that the deliverance of Jerusalem was a glorious event and one of the outstanding episodes of all Judah's history, yet the country was left in ruins.

This circumstance has led some scholars to follow another chronological clue and seek a more satisfactory ending for the period. It is pointed out that the coalition of Syria and Ephraim against Judah (Isa. 7:1, 2), which Assyrian events would require to be placed about 735 B. C., must have come at the very beginning of Ahaz' reign (2 Ki. 15:37 with 16:5). This is understood to be the absolute beginning of the sixteen years assigned to him, and not the beginning of his sole rule after a regency with his father Jotham. This would make Hezekiah come to the throne about 720 or 719 B. C., and, of course, extend his rule to 691 or 690. But this sets aside the specific statement of 2 Ki. 18:9, 10, that he was already in his sixth year when Samaria fell, and therefore must have come to the throne about 727 B. C. It also makes the

account in Chronicles of his early efforts to enlist the people of northern Israel in a movement toward religious reform (2 Ch. 30:1ff) seem less probable, as it would have been a hazardous undertaking after Samaria became an Assyrian province.

In view of the difficulties which beset this theory, another solution is here proposed. In the interest of clearness, it will first be briefly stated and afterwards defended. It is that Hezekiah's sickness took place after the invasion of 701 B. C., as it is recorded in all the narratives. That after three years more he associated with himself as king his son Manasseh, then a boy of twelve, intending as soon as he could safely do so to give over political affairs into other hands, and devote himself for the period of his added years to the religious welfare of his people. Thus would the years after 698 B. C. be accredited to Manasseh's long reign of fifty-five, which any other scheme for setting forward the close of Hezekiah's reign would be compelled correspondingly to shorten.

Perhaps the first objection raised to this view would be that, according to the commonly received opinion, Manasseh was not born until some time after his father's illness. But the idea, of course, is only an inference from the supposition that he began to reign at the time of Hezekiah's death. It is true that Josephus (Ant. X, II. 1) makes much of the idea that Hezekiah's grief in his sickness was not on account of his reluctance to give up life, but because he had no son, and that God through the prophet promised both to restore him and to give him an heir to the throne. Of all this there is nothing in the Scripture narratives. The only passages that have any particular bearing on the question are Isa. 39:7, where the reference seems to be to descendants at a remote period of the future to which the prediction refers; and Isa. 38:19, which accords much better with the contrary view: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: The father to the sons (bānîm) shall make known thy truth."

We may now examine the reasons assigned for placing

the sickness of Hezekiah and the embassy of Merodach-baladan before the invasion of Sennacherib. All of them appear to be inconclusive. One is that Hezekiah could not have shown such treasures as he did to the ambassadors (Isa. 39:2), after the desolation of his country and the payment of a heavy tribute to Sennacherib. It was no doubt a great strain upon his resources to raise such an amount on demand. Rogers (*History of Babylonia and Assyria,* II, 371 n. 1) estimates this at $5,650,000 in our money. To pay it he was obliged to take all the silver in the house of Jehovah and in the treasures of the king's house, and also cut off gold from the doors and door-posts of the temple (2 Ki. 18:15, 16). But how long the treasury was allowed to remain thus depleted is another question. There is no reason to think the city was impoverished. It had not been through a protracted siege, probably only a blockade for a brief period. It would have been deemed necessary to take immediate steps, after the withdrawal of Sennacherib from the land, to replenish the treasury, if for no other reason, to aid in the rehabilitation of the wasted country districts. Menahem of Israel had raised a thousand talents in an emergency to buy the aid of Pul of Assyria by taking a fixed sum from all the wealthy men of his realm (2 Ki. 15:19, 20). Jehoiakim of Judah at a later time raised the amount demanded by Pharaoh-Necho by exacting it of the people according to their property valuation (2 Ki. 23:35). If such drastic measures as this were not resorted to in the present instance, a people who have been known as a race of money lenders would not have been at a loss to devise means for supplying funds for the emergency. It is worth while to observe also that the treasures shown by Hezekiah did not consist altogether of gold and silver, but of costly articles of various kinds, and of warlike equipment (Isa. 39:2). Besides it is stated in 2 Ch. 32:23 that much had come in from other peoples in the way of gifts of honor after the deliverance of the city from Sennacherib. This argument does not therefore appear to be of great weight.

Others are of even less consequence. For example, it is

said that no mention is made in Hezekiah's psalm (Isa. 38:9-20) of the deliverance of the city, and that this would be unaccountable, if that deliverance was past. But the psalm was on a single definite subject. It was intended to celebrate his recovery from what seemed a fatal illness, and there was no occasion to refer to that which had in all probability been commemorated in other psalms of the period.

Then it is said further that the promise made to Hezekiah at the time of his prayer for recovery from his illness, that he and the city of Jerusalem should be delivered out of the hand of the king of Assyria (Isa. 38:6), proves this deliverance to have been yet in the future. But what was of more pressing concern to the inhabitants of the city than their future safety? From a human standpoint it was altogether probable that Sennacherib would return to the west land at no distant date and make another attempt on Jerusalem. The promise made to Hezekiah is therefore taken naturally to mean that, for the period to which his life was extended, he and his city should be safe from further aggression.

But it is said finally, that at the time following the invasion of Sennacherib Merodach-baladan was no longer king of Babylon. It is necessary therefore to give some consideration to this contention. The facts seem to be these. Merodach-baladan had been already twice king of Babylon. He had ruled over the city, together with all southern Babylonia, for twelve years during the reign of Sargon II, from 721 to 709 B. C., and had held his own against all the power of Assyria (R. II, 316ff, 336ff). He had himself made king again in 702 B. C., and was dislodged after a reign of nine months by Sennacherib (R. II, 356ff). A man by the name of Bel-ibni, of little force and ability apparently, but wholly subservient to Sennacherib, was placed on the throne. He is in the several lists put down as king for the next three years (R. I, 514, 533, 535), but according to McCurdy (*History, Prophecy and the Monuments,* II, p. 275), this mock kingship "was intended merely as a compromise and makeshift till the time should come for the formal annexation of

the whole country." While Sennacherib was engaged in his campaign in Palestine in 701 B. C. rebellion broke out again in Babylon. Bel-ibni was forced into a position hostile to Assyria, while Merodach-baladan joined in the revolt (R. II, 373f). If we may trust his former record, he was the chief figure in the rebellion, and the one to whom the populace would turn as the only man capable of carrying the struggle to a successful issue. With the Babylonians then hostile to the rule of Sennacherib, refusing ever to acknowledge him as king because of his ignoring their time-honored customs as to the manner of his assuming the royal prerogative (R. II, 355f) ; and with Bel-ibni helpless against public sentiment, while Merodach-baladan was apparently the brains and organizer of the revolt, there does not seem to be any serious objection to his being styled king of Babylon, a position he had held during the greater part of the time from the beginning of Sargon's reign until that very day. Moreover, one of the accounts (2 Ch. 32:31) does not mention him by name, but simply speaks of "the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon." We may suppose that Hezekiah's sickness followed soon after the deliverance of Jerusalem. The general note of time, "in those days," found in all the accounts is sufficiently explained by the fact that in all the narratives the disastrous ending of Sennacherib's campaign had been made to include the circumstances of his death at the hands of his sons twenty years later. The news of these events would soon reach Babylonia, for according to Rogers (II, 373) "news traveled far and fast in the ancient orient." Nothing would be of more importance to Merodach-baladan, knowing the certainty that Sennacherib would soon give his attention to the uprising in Babylon, than seeking to stir up more trouble for him in the west land. Therefore, hearing of Hezekiah's successful resistance, and of his sickness and recovery, the opportunity offered itself, under the guise of congratulations on his recovery and interest in the reported wonder connected with it, of finding what chance there was of stirring up a new revolt in Palestine.

If now this order of events is adopted, the simplest explanation of the reference of Sennacherib's campaign to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah (2 Ki. 18:13=Isa. 36:1) is that it was incorporated in the text from the marginal note of some scribe. Reasoning from the fact that the king lived fifteen years after this event, he concluded that it must have happened fifteen years before the end of his twenty-nine years' reign, and therefore in his fourteenth year.

Having thus shown that the recovery of Hezekiah and the embassy of Merodach-baladan may have come after the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, the order in which they are recorded in all the narratives, we may proceed to inquire whether there are any positive evidences that Hezekiah associated Manasseh with himself in the rule and devoted himself mainly to religious affairs.

In the first place, it was not uncommon for a ruler to make his successor king during his own lifetime. David had made Solomon king while he yet lived (1 Ki. 1:32ff). Jehoshaphat, between whose reign and that of Hezekiah there are remarkable similarities, had done the same with Jehoram (2 Ki. 8:16), whose rule was almost as disastrous for Judah as that of Manasseh. It would have been perfectly natural for Hezekiah, after the stormy period through which he had passed, to desire that his later years should be spent in more peaceful occupations. We have a hint of this in his psalm (Isa. 38:10), where the most probable translation is, "I said, In the tranquillity (*dŏmî*, 'cessation,' 'quiet') of my days I shall go into the gates of Sheol." On his restoration and the assurance that he should be safe from the king of Assyria, more than ever would he feel free to give himself to that which was most upon his heart. We may suppose that he continued in his sole rule for three years after the departure of Sennacherib, until the land had in a measure recovered from the ravages of war (Isa. 37:30), and then made Manasseh joint ruler with himself. This from a mere question of policy would have some things to commend it. It would serve to allay the suspicions of Sennacherib that Hezekiah

might again stir up trouble among his western dependencies. Apparently he regarded him as the ringleader in the former revolt (R. II, 365). The knowledge that he was giving himself to the religious interests of his people would be reassuring.

But there are other evidences that Hezekiah was deeply interested in religious matters, and felt that to the neglect of Jehovah worship were traceable calamities that had already come upon his people. According to the Chronicler's account he had begun his reign by reorganizing the temple services and reinstituting the passover. His appeals to his own people and to those of northern Israel for co-operation were based upon the assertion that religious neglect and unfaithfulness were the real causes of their misfortunes (2 Ch. 29:6-9; 30:7-9). There would now be the added conviction that the later disasters were also caused by sin against Jehovah. It may be that some of Hezekiah's ideas of religion at this time were a little shallow, as were Josiah's at a later period. They seem to have been concerned chiefly with formal worship. Some things in his psalm indicate his cherished desire for the rest of his life. It is possible that we have in the difficult expression, "I shall go softly" (Isa. 38:15), a reference to this. The word *'eddaddeh,* from *dadhah,* is found elsewhere only in Ps. 42:4 (Heb. 5). There the idea seems to be that of "leading in solemn procession" to the house of God. If it is the same here, the reference would be to the part he desired to take in the processions connected with the temple worship. However this may be, we have in v. 20 a clear declaration of his purpose: "Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of Jehovah."

If the ideas here advocated are correct, they add new significance to the events of the period we are studying. Their bearing upon the larger questions of Isaiah criticism may be deferred for the present. But now we cannot fail to note the additional light thrown on some things connected with the king's illness and the coming of the ambassadors from Babylon. The prayer of Heze-

kiah, when told by the prophet that he must die, has always seemed a strange utterance. George Matheson in his *Representative Men of the Bible* (II, 256) discourses upon the paradoxical fact of a man facing death, and yet pleading as the reason why he should be spared his own rectitude. Usually in such extremity men are oppressed with a sense of their own unworthiness. Paradoxical it truly is, if this incident had only a personal bearing. But remembering Hezekiah's deep interest in the religious welfare of the people, his efforts in the past for their reformation, and his ardent desire for the future, the plea seems natural. It was that Jehovah would remember the good he had done and spare him yet to devote himself to his cherished purpose. Also Isaiah's displeasure in the matter of the ambassadors gains new significance, if this incident happened after the deliverance of the city from Sennacherib. Always counseling trust in Jehovah for the salvation of the state, as against shrewd political maneuvering and alliances, it is easy to see how he must have felt on this occasion. That the king, so soon after his godless politicians had brought Jerusalem to the verge of destruction by alliances against Assyria, should again receive with such consideration ambassadors of another power, and withal from the sworn enemy of Sennacherib their overlord, was a proceeding fraught with the greatest danger, and was worthy of the severest rebuke. This order of events also deprives of force the contention that Isaiah could not have spoken of a future danger from Babylon when the immediate danger was an Assyrian invasion. The Assyrian crisis was now in the past. Hezekiah's strange answer to the prophet's prediction, "Good is the word of Jehovah" (Isa. 39:8), is probably to be taken as the words of a man who now saw the real significance of his act, and meekly accepted God's sentence as just, while he humbly clung to the assurance that the evil had been postponed beyond his own days. This transaction with the ambassadors is elsewhere spoken of as the outstanding sin of Hezekiah's life and is ascribed to pride (2 Ch. 32:25, 26, 31). Per-

haps as he showed the ambassadors his resources and the fortifications of the city, and recounted his own part in its defense, he was led to glory in these things, and forgot the oft repeated doctrine of Isaiah, that in quietness and confidence is strength (Ch. 30:15), and that the fear of Jehovah is treasure (33:6). If so, we are assured that he humbled himself (2 Ch. 32:26), and we may think of him as facing the added years of his life with no less interest in public worship, but with a deeper appreciation of the religious needs of his people.

We may now, before we go on to consider this period of the king's life, give a brief survey of the situation at its beginning. It has probably been observed that we do not here accept the theory, supported by some scholars, of a second invasion by Sennacherib a number of years afterward directed against Egypt, during which he made another attempt to compel the surrender of Jerusalem, and at which time occurred the great deliverance, a plague overtaking his army in the neighborhood of Pelusium. The theory seems to rest on rather slender historical evidence, and besides would require us to believe that the Scripture narrators have woven together two campaigns widely separated in time and circumstances. Placing then the salvation of the city in 701 B. C., what was the outlook? There is some doubt as to the precise situation on account of uncertainty as to the date to which Isa. 22:1-14 is to be referred. By some it is placed immediately after the withdrawal of Sennacherib's army; but by the majority of scholars, perhaps, it is placed earlier during one of the investments of the city. In any case it is a somber prophecy and presents a serious difficulty to the interpreter, to account for the sudden change in tone from Isaiah's confident predictions in the supreme crisis of the city. But this difficulty is greatly relieved when we consider that the change was not one affecting the prophet's faith in Jehovah and the ultimate triumph of his purposes, but only reveals his grievous disappointment over the unresponsiveness of the people. Perhaps we should not be far wrong in assuming that, after the

first days of excitement following the deliverance, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were much the same they had been before. The disciples of Isaiah, of whom Hezekiah was one, had received a great uplift for their faith through the evidences of Jehovah's workings in their recent history. Others perhaps saw in them only the ordinary fortunes that come to men and nations. Many were bearing grievous losses and burdens as a result of the cruelties and desolation of war. Two things may have had a sobering effect upon the people and pointed to better things. One was the apparently hopeless illness of the king and the wonder connected with his restoration (Isa. 38:7, 88). The other was Hezekiah's own penitence and that of his people after his lapse in the matter of the ambassadors from Babylon (2 Ch. 32:26). These things gave promise that the efforts of Isaiah and Hezekiah for the religious awakening of the people during the years that followed might not go unrewarded. Jehovah had been gracious, he had promised relief from Assyria. Might he not do marvels for them if they should turn to him? In view of what we know to have followed in the days of Manasseh, when the doom of the nation was finally sealed (2 Ki. 21:10-15; 24:3, 4), the period was one presenting tremendous issues. It was truly the day of grace for Judah.

II. Glimpses into an Unexplored Period.

There is something fascinating about an inquiry into the state of things in Judah and Jerusalem during the fifteen years following Sennacherib's invasion. What were Isaiah and Hezekiah doing? Hezekiah is the only man who ever knew the precise time of his death, and yet was free to act for so long a time in the light of that sobering knowledge. What great ideas and undertakings must have engaged his thoughts and those of the prophet whose whole soul had been occupied for nearly forty years with the fortunes of his people? When there is added to this human interest in the actors the possibility, not to say probability, that there were conditions exist-

ing and events happening in the world of that day which would throw great light on portions of the book of Isaiah, the question becomes one of absorbing interest.

Hitherto but little attention has been given to this period for several reasons. Almost no external history is recorded of Manasseh's reign. The narratives are occupied with the religious decline and debasing idolatry which were the outstanding features of his time. Naturally there has been little inspiration to look for great and significant things in a reign of such unrelieved darkness. We are not told at what time of Manasseh's rule his persecution of the Jehovah worshippers occurred. The common opinion seems to have been that it followed close upon his accesssion; perhaps because of the tradition that Isaiah suffered martyrdom at this time, and the belief that Hezekiah was dead. But this could hardly have been, since he was only a boy of twelve when he began to reign, and the sins of the time are not charged to his counselors but to himself. We are given to understand that it was his own deliberate policy which ended Judah's day of salvation and made it henceforth a doomed nation (2 Ki. 24:3, 4). Again those who have extended Hezekiah's rule down to 690 B. C. or later have been interested in these years chiefly for the light which they might throw upon the circumstances of his own reign. Yet, while our positive information as to the period is meager, it is not difficult to draw some conclusions as to its general character which have a high degree of probability, and which will prepare the way for the discussion that is to follow.

(I) We may conclude that the seductions of idolatry, which later won over Manasseh and involved himself and his country in ruin, were even now becoming a live issue and a threatening danger to Judah. It would be interesting to inquire into the practice of the Assyrian monarchs with reference to the religion of conquered states. Shalmaneser III says of the cities of a certain prince encountered by him on one of his western campaigns, "My gods I brought into his temples, I made a

feast in his palaces" (R. II, 226). Sennacherib says of a region devastated by him (Bellino Cylinder, 1, 20): "That district I settled again. One ox, ten sheep, ten *goats* (these twenty beasts being the best of every kind), I appointed (*as a sacrifice*) to the gods of Assyria, my Lords, in every township." To this the translator of the inscription, H. F. Talbot, appends the note, "Into the conquered country he introduced the Assyrian worship, and, of course, made due provision for the support of the priests, and sacrifices to the gods." Rogers states in connection with Tiglathpileser's capture of Gaza, "The worship of the god Ashur was introduced along with that of the other gods native to the place" (II, 287). The effect of this policy had already been felt in northern Israel at the fall of Samaria. McCurdy writes (*H. P. & M.*, I, p. 69): "The old religion became extinct in Samaria, because the priests had been deported after the destruction of the city, doubtless with a view of preventing the revival of patriotic feeling among the remaining inhabitants." The mingling of various forms of worship, combined with a superstitious fear of Jehovah, "the god of the land," among the colonists from various foreign regions, is described in 2 Ki. 17:29-33. The country of Judah had been overrun by Sennacherib, and the cities he had spoiled, as he tells us, were cut off from Hezekiah's territory and given to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza (Taylor Prism III, 23-26). What effect this had upon the religion of the country districts it is easy to imagine. McCurdy says (*H. P. & M.*, I, p. 341) that "even the vasselage of one nation to another brought with it at least an outward acknowledgment of the gods of the suzerain."

But really there is no need to appeal to this custom of Assyrian kings in order to prove that there must have been at his time serious danger of a return to idolatry among the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah. The sudden changes from Jehovah worship to idolatry, or the reverse, between the reigns of father and son from Uzziah to Manasseh, show clearly that it was not purely a personal matter of the character of the ruler, but a

question of party. The heathen party was never dead at this period, but only waiting an opportunity to bring about a reaction against strict Jehovah worship. Isaiah earlier in his ministry had lamented the fact that customs from the east were invading the realm and that the land was full of idols (Isa. 2:6,8). If chapter I of his prophecy is to be assigned to the time of Sennacherib's invasion, as it is by most critics, we have positive evidence that, after the reforms of Hezekiah, the idolatrous worship connected with the terebinths and gardens was still in existence (Isa. 1:29). The truth seems to be that the reaction from the reform measures, which came in like a flood later in Manasseh's reign, was already beginning to show itself. If it be thought that the marvelous deliverance of the city and the fulfillment of Isaiah's predictions would have counteracted such tendencies, we need only consider the case of the fulfillment of Jeremiah's predictions at the downfall of the city. Clearly as he maintained that their calamity was Jehovah's chastisement for their sin in turning from him, the remnant that escaped to Egypt attributed it to neglect of the worship of the queen of heaven (Jer. 44:15-19). The spiritually minded remnant were uplifted and strengthened in faith by the salvation of the city, but those with idolatrous tendencies may quite possibly have been confirmed in their former beliefs.

It may be thought strange that we should assume Hezekiah, in the face of such conditions, to have relinquished his kingly authority, by which he might have carried out aggressive measures for reform, and to have adopted purely spiritual measures. But the reaction against his earlier course in forcibly putting down idolatry (2 Ki. 18:4) may have made this advisable. There is some evidence of the existence of popular feeling against the king because of his destruction of the high places. Sennacherib's general in his parley with the officers of Hezekiah shrewdly alluded to the taking away of the high places and altars throughout the country districts and the centralization of worship in Jerusalem (Isa. 36:7). The intention of this was apparently to bring the king

into disfavor with those of his subjects who had worshipped at these shrines. One of the reasons for the collapse of the cause of Nabonidus, the last king of the Chaldeans, and the acceptance of Cyrus by the inhabitants of Babylon, was the discontent, fostered by the priests, over his neglect of religious ceremonies and his bringing the gods of other cities to the capital (Pinches, *The O. T. in the Light of the Historical Records of Assyria and Babylonia,* pp. 412-414). And while the object of Nabonidus was wholly different from that of Hezekiah, perhaps no more than to bring the idols to Babylon for protection, it only shows what a powerful weapon popular prejudice against the religious policy of a ruler can be made. So we may think of the king as resorting to the less drastic but more effectual means of building up the true worship and quickening the faith of his people. The movement toward Assyrian and Babylonian forms of worship, which reached its full tide some years later in Manasseh's reign, had set in, and the best efforts of the king and the prophet Isaiah were directed toward counteracting this baneful influence.

(II) There is now another well-founded conclusion which we may draw with reference to conditions existing during this period. It is altogether probable that a wide dispersion of captives from northern Israel and Judah to many lands had already taken place, and that many at this time or a little later had found a hard lot in and around Babylon. It has almost come to be regarded as settled by modern critics that no wide dispersion of Israel existed until the Greek period. And so passages like Isa. 11:11, which speak of a re-gathering from many countries, have been explained on the one hand by conservative scholars as prophetic of a scattering not yet accomplished; and by others as proof positive of a late date for the passages in question. If we mean organized communities, living among the different nations and exerting a potent influence upon social life, these were, perhaps, a later development. We may, however, have to push even this phase of the dispersion back to an earlier date. Aramaic papyri recently discovered

in Egypt show the existence of a flourishing colony of Jews in that country, worshiping their God in a temple with various kinds of offerings, far back in the fifth century B. C. (Goodspeed in *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, art. "papyrus," p. 2239). But at all events the scattering of Hebrew captives among many nations had become an accomplished fact long before the Babylonian exile. We see the means by which this was largely brought about in the practice of the Assyrian conquerors. This was an age of subjugation of smaller nations, of forcible deportation and colonization in foreign lands. Tiglathpileser IV was the first to adopt it on a large scale as a settled governmental policy, in order to make his empire more homogeneous and diminish the likelihood of rebellions (R. II, 270), and in this he was followed by Sargon II (R. II, 351) and later rulers. Some of these deportations of captive peoples were on a stupendous scale. Sennacherib on his return from his campaign against Babylonia in 702 B. C. brought back with him, besides immense booty, two hundred and eight thousand captives (R. II, 359). The harshness and barbarity with which subject peoples were torn from their homes to be colonized in other parts of the world is appalling. After a harrowing description of the way he desolated the land of Ellipi in the Median mountains "like a storm wind," Sennacherib continues (Taylor Prism II, 15-17): "The inhabitants, young, old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen and sheep without number I drove away." Isaiah's prophetic picture of streams of half-naked captives marched from Egypt and Ethiopia to Assyria is a witness to the gruesome truth of these early inscriptions (Isa. 20:4). Sometimes the inhabitants were carried away and distributed as spoil, as is stated in l. 13 of the Bellino Cylinder. In the same inscription (l. 43) Sennacherib speaks of bringing prisoners of war from various places to Nineveh to work at his building projects: "Men of Chaldaea, Aram, Manna, Kue, and Cilicia, who had not bowed down to my yoke, I brought away as captives, and I compelled them to make bricks." No doubt many of them were sold as

slaves, dealers following in the rear of armies for this purpose. A reference to this custom of trafficking in prisoners by Tyrian slave-dealers is found as early as Amos (ch. 1:9), and still more explicitly in Joel (ch. 3:4-6).

But more to our present purpose is the evidence that the kingdoms of Israel and Judah suffered the common lot of smaller nationalities so soon as their country came to be invaded by these Assyrian conquerors. Menahem's payment of tribute to Tiglathpileser saved his country for the time being from the ravages of war, but it was only for a few years. In the days of Pekah he came again and overran the northern districts of Israel and the land of Gilead, and carried the people captive to Assyria (2 Ki. 15:29; cf. 1 Ch. 5:26). Some ten years later occurred the siege and capture of Samaria and the deportation of many of the inhabitants to regions of Mesopotamia and the cities of the Medes (2 Ki. 17:5, 6). Sargon in his account gives the number carried into captivity as twenty-seven thousand two hundred and ninety (R. II, 315), and the Scripture narrative states that their places were filled by colonists from Babylon and other cities (2 Ki., 17:24). As to the fortunes of Judah about twenty years afterwards, we have Sennacherib's own statement (Taylor Prism, III, 11-20) that in his campaign he took forty-six fortified cities and small towns without number, and brought out from these places, along with great spoil in cattle, two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty persons. Rogers, appealing to the Assyrian word used, understands that these people were not carried into captivity, but only marched out of their cities and compelled to give allegiance to Assyria (II, 370, n. 1). But if we refer Isa. I to the time of Sennacherib's invasion, as is done by most scholars, we have the statement of the prophet that the country was desolate and the cities burned with fire (v. 7). The destruction was so sweeping that only a "very small remnant" had been left, and but for the forbearance of Jehovah they would have been as Sodom (v. 9). What had become of the inhabitants of these cities? Moreover Sennacherib's statement includes

the two hundred thousand persons, along with the cattle of various kinds, in the capture which he "counted as spoil." On the view which we have adopted, that this is the campaign which ended so disastrously for the Assyrian conqueror, it may be said further that nothing would have served better to throw a glamour over its humiliating end than the return to Nineveh with such a multitude of captives.

To these direct historical statements as to the deportations of Israel and Judah may be added numerous confirmatory references in other passages of Scripture. Hosea had said, perhaps in the way of prediction, but with a clear vision of what awaited his people: "Israel is swallowed up: now are they among the nations as a vessel wherein none delighteth" (ch. 8:8). Again he said (9:17): "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations." As to the condition in Judah during the great crisis at the capital, we may recall the appeal of Hezekiah to Isaiah, that he lift up his prayer for the remnant that was left (Isa. 37:4), as well as the prediction of the prophet himself that "the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward" (v. 31). To this may be added the account in 2 Ch. 29: 8, 9, which makes Hezekiah in the beginning of his reign lament the fact that, because of former unfaithfulness, sons, daughters and wives of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem were already in captivity. The scattering of the people in these days must have reached large proportions. Passages like Isa. 43:5, 6; 49:12, which are by critics assigned to the Babylonian exile, bear witness to a much wider dispersion than could have been the result of Nebuchadnezzar's deportations. In reality the Assyrian captivities were on a vaster scale than the Babylonian. Hence a later estimate of the two declares (Jer. 50:17): "Israel is a hunted (Heb. "scattered") sheep; the lions have driven him away: first, the king of Assyria devoured him; and now at last Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, hath broken his bones."

We have, it is true, no positive statements in the historical narratives that any of these captives were taken to Babylon. Yet Babylonia was an integral part of the Assyrian empire, and since more than one Assyrian king during these years had found this country a perplexing governmental problem, the same principle of carrying away inhabitants and colonizing foreigners was applied here also. Sargon had carried some of the people to the newly conquered province of Samaria, and Sennacherib carried off great numbers. Their places were doubtless filled by people from other conquered nations, and since Palestine was so often invaded at this period, there is nothing improbable in the supposition that many of the Hebrew captives were settled in this land. It is quite significant that Sennacherib had been in Babylonia the year before his Palestinian campaign, and at that time had carried off the two hundred and eight thousand captives; and that after leaving Palestine, where he had taken over two hundred thousand prisoners from the cities of Judah, he turned his face toward Babylon again to put down a new revolt (R. II, 359f, 373f). It would be rather remarkable if some of them were not taken to this land for colonization after his new campaign of subjugation. Having shown the probability that captives from among the Israelites were at this period held in servitude in Babylon, we must leave the argument for the present. Other and more direct evidence, which it is not permitted to bring forward at this point of the discussion, will be introduced later. If it be difficult to think that Hezekiah would have received so cordially ambassadors from a land where his people were suffering bondage, we need only remember that at that time no disposition could have been made of the recent captives from Judah. Also that, if prisoners from earlier conquests were already there, Merodach-baladan's position as an opponent of Assyria would have encouraged the hope that the success of his cause might result in their release.

(III) Along with these conditions which existed with reference to Israel, there were during this period some matters of external history which need to be kept in

mind. These relate especially to the status and fortunes of the city of Babylon. There is perhaps a popular impression that, during this time when Assyria had become the dominant world power, Babylon was a place of little consequence. It had, as we have seen, been for twelve years, under Merodach-baladan, in open rebellion against Assyria, during the rule of one of the mightiest monarchs of the empire, Sargon II; and it was by no means impossible that the city and land should again become an independent kingdom. They had had an ancient and glorious history, and were still the center of learning and culture for the empire, even though the brute force of the new power had brought them into subjection. It was this feeling of superiority which was at the root of the difficulties Sennacherib had in governing this part of his realm. Rogers speaks of this "proud and ancient people who felt themselves to be the better, even though they were the weaker, portion of the empire," and of Assyria as "still a raw and uncouth country, leaning upon Babylonia for every sign of culture," and declares that "Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, and Sargon had done nothing to diminish the national feeling in Babylonia, but rather had contributed fuel to the flame" (II, 352ff). Sennacherib's change of policy, by which he ignored Babylonian pride and prestige, and sought to govern the people with a strong hand as he would any uncivilized province of his empire (R. II, 355ff), led to numerous revolts, in two of which Merodach-baladan was the chief actor. But of more importance for our present purpose was the final outcome of this policy. Baffled in his efforts at complete subjugation, Sennacherib at last resolved to rid himself of the problem and danger of a dual center of influence and power in his empire, and in 689 B. C. completely destroyed the city, breaking down its walls and burning it with fire. Rogers characterizes its destruction as "one of the wildest scenes of human folly in all history" (II, 381).

These things, according to our view, happened during the period when Isaiah and Hezekiah were laboring together at Jerusalem to awaken the faith and courage of

the remnant of Judah. If numbers of their own people had come to be in servitude in this far off city and land, the fact was not one of indifference to them, and anxiously must the prophet have watched the course of affairs at Babylon, and coming events must have cast long and ominous shadows to his prophetic vision. From what part of the home land they had come did not matter; they were Israelites, and all the prophets in their thoughts of a restoration looked for the regathering of a reunited Israel. Neither did it matter that there was among these captives in a foreign land no community life, in connection with which, as during the later Babylonian captivity, their spirit and institutions might be preserved. There was now no question of the extinction of their national life, as in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jerusalem was still standing, though having passed through the fire; and the power of Jehovah had been vouchsafed for her deliverance, and his promise assured to the remnant the divine protection. The ardent desire now of every patriot was for the release of his countrymen from foreign slavery, and the return to Jerusalem of more than her former glory. Their sorrow over their exiled brethren was the keener that no social and religious life in common was possible to them, perhaps not even the opportunity of communicating with relatives in the home land. It could not be that Jehovah was indifferent to the sufferings of his afflicted people; he would again have compassion upon them; and glorious would be the day when he should bind up the hurt of his people and heal the stroke of their wound.

III. Idolatry and the Conqueror from the East.

By far the strongest argument produced by those who deny Isaiah's authorship of chapters 40-66 of the prophecy has reference to what are called the Cyrus passages. It is claimed that these are not predictions of a conqueror to come, but that they appeal to the facts of his victorious career as already well known. We may admit the force of this contention. It is unnatural, on the one hand, to think of the prophet as taking his stand in the

ideal future, and describing things which would be largely unintelligible to his own day. And, on the other hand, the explanation of so many perfect tenses in the descriptions as prophetic puts a considerable strain on this use of the Hebrew perfect. Much has been made of the tremendous sensation caused by the conquests of Cyrus, as though he were the chief figure in chapters 40-48. Yet the passages which directly refer to the conqueror are few. They are chs. 41:1-7, 25; 44:28-45:13; 46:11; and (?) 48:14-16. It is the purpose of this chapter to inquire whether Cyrus is, after all, the person referred to, except in so far as he may have fulfilled the idea set forth in the prophet's predictions.

It will now be necessary to examine these passages somewhat in detail. Isa. 46:11 presents no difficulty, and may be dismissed. It simply describes a rapacious conqueror under the figure of a bird of prey. Isa. 48:14-16 has affinities with another class of passages, and will be deferred for consideration later. This leaves two main passages for our immediate discussion.

(I) As to chapter 41, it may be admitted this is to all appearances an appeal to recent history. Jehovah has raised up one from the east (v. 2), but who is he? No name is given to him. It is not permissible to argue from the word translated "raised up" (*hē'îr*), and the use of the same in Ezra 1:1 and 2 Ch. 36:22 of Jehovah's stirring up the spirit of Cyrus, that the latter passages contain an allusion to the former. The word in question is a common one and simply means the stirring up of someone to activity. It is used in Isa. 13:17 of Jehovah stirring up the Medes against Babylon, and in Ezek. 23:22 of his stirring up nations against Jerusalem. Moreover the precise expression used of Cyrus in Ezra. 1:1, to "stir up the spirit of," is used elsewhere of Jehovah's stirring up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria (1 Ch. 5:26), of his arousing the Phillistines and Arabians against Jehoram (2 Ch. 21:16), and of his moving Zerubbabel and others to begin the work of rebuilding the temple (Hag. 1:14).

Again, on a careful examination of the way in which

the victorious progress of this personage is described in verses 2-7, it will be seen that the description is perfectly general and such as might have been applied to any of the great conquerors of the Assyrian period. Let us see how it compares with the words spoken elsewhere of the kings of Assyria. Hezekiah, in his prayer when Jerusalem was threatened, admited the truth of the boastful claims of the invader: "The kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries, and their land, and have cast their gods into the fire" (Isa. 37:18, 19). Isaiah records some of the boastings of these haughty conquerors. They had removed the bounds of the peoples, robbed their treasures, gathered the riches of the earth as one gathers eggs that are forsaken (Isa. 10:13, 14). All this description which has been supposed to refer to Cyrus could have been said with literal truth of Sennacherib, whose invasion was fresh in the minds of the people of Jerusalem. According to the prophet, Jehovah had brought it to pass that it should be his to make ruinous heaps of fortified cities, while their inhabitants were dismayed and confounded (Isa. 37:26, 27). The Rabshakeh, speaking for the great king, had asked triumphantly whether any of the gods of the nations had delivered their country out of his hand (Isa. 36:18-20). It would be easy to parallel these with some of Sennacherib's own descriptions of his victorious marches as given on the Taylor Prism. The occurrence of the word "isles" in v. 5 is sometimes spoken of as an evidence of a later date and of a more distant western horizon than that of Isaiah's day. But the proper original meaning of the word seems to be "coast-lands." It is thrice used by Isaiah in the singular (ch. 20:6; 23:2, 6) of the coast-lands of Palestine or Phoenicia. And, with Tyre carrying on her commerce with colonies to the farthest western limits of the Mediterranean, it does not seem difficult to suppose even the Aegean Islands were in close touch with what was happening in western Asia, and would be alarmed over the victorious advances of the Assyrians. One other point requires notice, and that is the reference in v. 25 to the conqueror as one who calls on Jehovah's name. This, even if spoken of

Cyrus, would not imply that he was a worshipper of Jehovah. And it is not at all impossible that Sennacherib, with the superstitious ideas of his time, may have called upon Jehovah as the god of the land he was invading. The words of the Rabshakeh seem to imply this: "Am I now come up without Jehovah against this land to destroy it? Jehovah said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it" (Isa. 36:10).

We may now consider the interpretation of the chapter on the two views, that Babylon is the place and the early conquests of Cyrus the background, and that Jerusalem in Isaiah's time is the place and Sennacherib's invasion the background. On the former view some unknown writer toward the close of the Babylonian exile is the prophet. The chapter contains a dialectic discussion, highly dramatic in form, first between Jehovah and the nations (vs. 1-7), and afterwards between Jehovah and the idols (vs. 21-29), on the question as to who raised up Cyrus and what explanation is to be given of his victorious career. The prophet, of course, asserts that Jehovah raised him up, but it is not quite clear to what he appeals to establish his claim, aside from the overwhelming nature of Cyrus' victories. It might be thought that he appeals to former predictions that such a conqueror would arise; but if so, we have no knowledge as to what they were. On the old idea that Cyrus was a monotheist, his sweeping victories might carry some conviction to the idolaters that Jehovah raised him up and was leading him; but even this would be tinged with the heathen conception that the stronger god prevailed over the weaker. But we now know that Cyrus, even though his early faith may have been of a somewhat purer form than that generally prevailing, was not a Jehovah worshipper. Nabonidus regarded him in his early conquests as the young servant of Merodach; and Cyrus himself, in the inscription on his cylinder, afterwards ascribed his victory over Babylon to Merodach, who "commanded that he should go to his city Babylon, and walked by his side like a friend and a companion" (Pinches in *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia,* art. "Cyrus," pp. 774,

775). Cyrus was enough of a politician to cultivate the friendship of the Jews by making the assertion that Jehovah the God of heaven had given him all the kingdoms of the earth (Ezra. 1:2). Knowing these things, the idolaters may be supposed to have been put to confusion over the impotence of their divinities, but certainly not convinced that Jehovah was back of the conquests of Cyrus. The most that we can claim is that the prophet challenges the idols to give a rational explanation of the victories of Cyrus, and by foretelling the course of future events (vs. 22, 23) to prove that they are gods. The argument, therefore, as an appeal to past history has little that is convincing about it; it must wait upon future developments to give it force.

On the other view, that Jerusalem is the place and Isaiah the speaker, the prophet's former pronouncements on the relation of Jehovah to the victorious progress of the Assyrian conqueror become the key to the understanding of this chapter. The historical section also, chs. 36-39, becomes not merely something introduced to vindicate Isaiah's earlier predictions, but furnishes the basis for teaching and appeals which are yet to follow in the latter half of the book. The prophet had earlier in his ministry given his explanation of the victories of the Assyrian monarch, before Judah was assailed. He had asserted the unique divinity of Jehovah and his control of the events of current history. He was using the Assyrian to chastise his people for their sins (Isa. 10:6). The victor himself was no more than a rod in the hand of one who wielded it upon an offender, or an implement for the accomplishment of any work (vs. 5, 15). When Jehovah had fulfilled his purpose in chastisement he would humble the haughty conqueror (v. 12). This was Isaiah's oft repeated message before the crisis in which Jerusalem was delivered (cf. Isa. 31:8, 9). All the coastlands must admit that it had been literally fulfilled in the humiliation of Sennacherib. Chapter 41 becomes now an intensely practical argument, to meet on the one hand the new drift toward idolatry, and on the other to encourage those who still held to their faith. Who raised up

the conqueror from the east? Jehovah raised him up, for he has dealt with him as he said, allowing him to sweep everything before him; and then, when he has accomplished his purpose, putting his hook in his nose and his bridle in his lips and turning him back by the way he came (Isa. 37: 29). The issue had been clearly drawn. Hezekiah in his prayer had pleaded for deliverance, in order that all the kingdoms of the earth might know Jehovah to be God alone (Isa. 37:20). Trust in Jehovah had been vindicated; the nations who trusted in other gods had been put to confusion. On the other hand, Israel is addressed (vs. 8-16) with words of consolation; Israel who had suffered grievously, but had not been cast off by Jehovah. Those incensed against them should be put to shame, and those warring against them should be as nothing (vs. 11, 12). Verses 17-20 may be understood naturally of the distresses of the poor in the desolated land after the invasion, and of Jehovah's promise of blessing. In verses 21-29, the challenge to the idols is overwhelming. They are not able to point to former predictions made by them, which have been fulfilled as were those of Isaiah (v. 22). The prophet calls upon them to venture a prediction as to what shall be in the future (v. 23). Not one among them can answer a word (v. 28). In the face of such vindication of the absolute and sole divinity of Jehovah the popular leaning toward idolatry is self-condemned: "Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work is of nought; an abomination is he that chooseth you" (v. 24).

(II) As to the passage in Isa. 44:28-45:13, it may be frankly admitted that here we have a more serious difficulty. Cyrus is mentioned by name as one whose hand Jehovah has taken to subdue nations before him. Further victories are promised him and the assurance given that through him Jerusalem and the temple shall be built and the exiles set free. This passage has more the nature of prediction, but even then it does not seem to foretell the coming of one whose name shall be Cyrus, but speaks of him as a character well known. In order to reconcile this with the view of Isaiah's authorship

of these chapters it has been thought by some that the name of Cyrus was a later insertion, after his release of the Jewish captives; or perhaps that the prophet used some general appellative which was afterwards altered to Cyrus. But none of the suggestions made seems to have furnished an acceptable solution. Realizing the extreme uncertainty of textual emendations, and the abuse to which this branch of criticism has been subject, we need not, however, reject the possibility of successful restoration of the text in passages which have become corrupt through transmission.

It is the purpose here to suggest a very simple alteration as the possible original from which the present reading *kôresh* (Cyrus) was derived. We may suppose that the prophet originally wrote *môrîsh* (dispossessor), the causative (*Hiph'îl*) participle from *yārash,* to "possess," referring to the aggressions of the Assyrian conqueror. The similarity of the two words in the present square Hebrew character, especially with the last vowel of *môrîsh* not indicated by a vowel letter, is striking; and even in the old Hebrew the initial letters *k* and *m* are not greatly unlike, as may be seen from line 5 of the Siloam Inscription. A study of the use of the word *yārash* will show its aptness to describe the idea indicated. Its root meaning is to "take possession of," especially by force. In the simple stem (*Qal*) it is used in Jer. 8:10 of the violent taking possession of fields; in Isa. 14:21 of a conquering people taking possession of the earth; in Hab. 1:6 of the Chaldeans marching through the breadth of the earth to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. Besides numerous instances of such use in the Old Testament, it is found in the same sense in line 7 of the inscription on the Moabite Stone, where it is said, "Omri took possession of (all the land) of Medeba." The causative (*Hiph'îl*) stem has a similar use, with the idea of "dispossessing" prominent. Instead of meaning "cause to possess," as we should expect, this meaning is exceptional, and the prevailing significance is to "cause others to possess" what belongs to one, and so to "dispossess" one. It is the word constantly used of the "driving out" of the

original inhabitants of Canaan. In Deut. 18:12 the participle is used: "Jehovah, thy God doth drive them out (*môrîsh*) from before thee." Again, the tribes of Israel "did not drive out" the Canaanites (Jud. 1:29, 30, 31, etc.). The use of the participle as a noun, meaning "dispossessor," is implied by the reading of several of the ancient versions on Ob. 17. Instead of the Massoretic reading, "the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (*môrāshêhem*), the Septuagint rendering, *tous kataklerονomēsantas autous*, "those taking possession of them," must have arisen from a Heb. original *môrîshêhem*, "their dispossessors."

But more significant than the general fitness of the word to express the idea in question is an instance of its specific use referring to the Assyrian conqueror. Not only is he characterized in general terms as one who despoils, robs, destroys, and deals treacherously (Isa. 17:14; 33:1), but Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, uses the Qal participle of *yārash* as an appellative to describe him. Playing upon the names of towns in his native district, he says of Mareshah: "I will yet bring unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah, him that shall possess thee" (Mic. 1:15). Sir George Adam Smith (*Twelve Prophets*, I, p. 385) translates as a proper name: "Again shall I bring the Possessor (conqueror) to thee." It may be that Micah's use of the word referring to the Assyrian was a matter of common knowledge. He may quite possibly have preached at the capital. His burning denunciation of the sins of the people of Jerusalem and Judah, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field," became the cause of an awakening in which king Hezekieh entreated the favor of Jehovah and the evil was stayed (Jer. 26:18, 19). He might, if he had so desired, have played upon the name Jerusalem on connection with *yārash*. In any case Isaiah's use of the word *môrîsh* in the connection supposed would easily have been recognized as referring to the Assyrian conqueror. It would perhaps be a better translation to render it "conqueror." An examination of our English versions reveals a fact which is not lacking in humor. With all the fighting

described in the Old Testament, from the conquest of the land of Canaan down to the last capture of Jerusalem by foreign invaders, the word "conquer" is not found once. The Hebrew had a profusion of words expressing every variety of overcoming in war, and these are translated in various ways, such as "smite," "subdue," "discomfit," "prevail," etc., but for some reason "conquer" is not used.

A reference to the two modern translations of the New Testament into Hebrew on Rev. 6:2, the only passage of the Bible where "conquer" is spoken of actual warfare, is also interesting. Delitzsch uses to describe the one who goes forth "conquering and to conquer" a word whose original signification was to "be pre-eminent," or "take the lead." It came in New Hebrew to mean "conquer," and so was used properly enough to express this idea in a translation for modern Jews. But in the Old Testament it meant nothing more warlike than to act as overseer of work, or to be a choirmaster in the musical services of the temple, as is witnessed by the designation "Chief Musician" in the headings of many of the psalms. The Salkinson-Ginsburg Testament, keeping closer to the classical idiom, paraphrases: "And he went forth as a hero of war who should prevail by his might." Thus we see that there was no Hebrew word which could be chosen as the exact equivalent of our English word "conquer," which ranges from subduing in battle to the spiritual conception of moral victory. But for conquering in the sense of overcoming and taking possession in war the Hiph'îl of *yārash* is the regular word. It is hardly exact to speak of the Israelites "driving out" the inhabitants of Canaan. They did not drive them out, they put them to the sword and took possession of their land.

Having now shown that the word *môrîsh,* which we suppose to have been originally used by the prophet instead of the present *kôresh* (Cyrus), is the precise expression to describe a conqueror like the Assyrian monarchs, let us consider the interpretation of the passage on this view. There is a common idea that this personage is here and elsewhere highly honored in what is said of

him. An examination will show that this is largely a halo which has been thrown around the head of Cyrus, the supposed original of the prophet's description. Matthew Henry, on Isa. 48:14, says of him, "He has done him this favour, this honour, to make him an instrument in the redemption of his people and therein a type of the great Redeemer, God's beloved Son, *in whom he was well pleased.*" The thought throughout is rather that of Jehovah's use of one who knows him not, as the instrument of his own sovereign pleasure. Jehovah has determined that Jerusalem shall be inhabited, and the desolation of Judah restored (ch. 44:26). He says of the conqueror, "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure" (v. 28). Shepherd is the word commonly used of a ruler, and is frequently found in the Old Testament in this sense. Kings were anciently spoken of as shepherds of their people. Sennacherib, in a list of high-sounding titles which he assumes, speaks of himself as "the wise shepherd" (Taylor Prism I, 3). Jerusalem is to be built and the temple restored. What need there may have been of rebuilding may be gathered from such passages as Isa. 22:9, 10, where it is said that, during the frantic efforts to defend the capital, the breaches of the city of David were many and houses were torn down to fortify the wall. It is not necessary to think of the temple as needing to be built again *de novo;* the same word here translated, "thy foundation shall be laid," is used of its restoration under Joash (2 Ch. 24:27). Chapter 45 begins the address of Jehovah to his anointed one, to the conqueror, whose right hand he has holden, to subdue nations before him. It is hardly necessary to say that the expression "his anointed" contains no allusion to the idea of a coming Messiah whom the conqueror resembles in his character as a deliverer. Outside of a few psalms, where the Davidic ruler is spoken of as typical of the Messianic King, and the probably direct reference to the coming One in Dan. 9:25, 26, the word in the Old Testament simply means one anointed to an office. Here the reference is to the conqueror as an anointed king, who belongs to Jehovah to do with him as he chooses.

There is implied no more of sacredness or honor attaching to his person than we have in Isa. 13:3, where Jehovah's hosts summoned against Babylon are called "my consecrated ones," a word elsewhere used of priests. In the description of his conquests which follows it is twice stated that the conqueror does not know Jehovah (vs. 4, 5), but he bestows titles upon him ("my shepherd," "my anointed one"), and gives him victory, in order to make himself known and for the sake of his people Israel (vs. 3-6). He shall build the city and let the exiles go (v. 13); but we look in vain for any intimation that he is represented in the character of a savior of Israel. It is not said that he shall deliver the exiles, but let them go, the same word being used which is applied to Pharaoh's letting Israel go from Egypt. Those who think of Cyrus, and that he is announced as the one who will deliver the captives from the Babylonian exile, a work so honorable as to entitle him to be thought of as a kind of heathen Messiah to Israel, have this to explain: that, after he has been supposedly hailed as a coming deliverer and the time of release draws near, he drops entirely out of sight before another figure, the servant of Jehovah. This conqueror does certain things for Israel, but simply because his movements, and history with him, are under the sovereign control of Another. In the beginning of the passage (ch. 44:24) Jehovah proclaims himself as Israel's Redeemer, and emphasis is placed upon his divine power as the assurance that these things shall come to pass. If this be the correct interpretation of the passage, ch. 45:9f is probably to be thought of, not as referring to the fainthearted in Israel, or to those who rebel at the idea of a heathen deliverer, but to the conqueror himself. He is intent upon his own schemes of conquest and aggrandizement; suppose he does not will to carry out the divine program? The prophet answers: "Ah he that striveth with his Former! a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!" Thus understood we have the same argument as in ch. 10. "He meaneth not so" (v. 7), but his refractoriness would be like the axe boasting itself against him that heweth therewith (v. 15).

The question may be raised as to the moral difficulty of supposing Isaiah to have thought of the conqueror as Jehovah's instrument for restoring the fortunes of Jerusalem and Judah. But there is nothing inherently improbable about this. Naturally he would not have thought of Sennacherib in that capacity, for he had predicted his fall by the sword in his own land (Isa. 37:7). But changes might easily occur and situations arise when another conqueror would find it good governmental policy to favor the west land. No one supposes that Cyrus at the later date was wholly innocent of political motives in favoring the Jews. And, in fact, Esarhaddon, the successor of Sennacherib, did completely reverse his father's policy toward Babylon, rebuilding the city and restoring its temple (R. II, 395f). The conception of the prophet is a magnificent one, embracing not only the restoration of Israel's captives but the making known of Jehovah as the only God to the ends of the earth. This could not be done simply by the sweeping victories of any conqueror, however he may have confounded the nations and put to shame their trust in idols. It would always be possible to think of this monarch as what he claimed himself to be, the representative of a stronger divinity, who overthrew all that ventured to oppose his arms. There must needs be coupled with this such a control of the affairs of history as would make it evident that there was a power over and above him, that shaped the destinies of kings and nations. This is the evidence of Jehovah's divinity which the prophet contemplates. As in chapter 18 his quiet waiting until the moment was ripe (v. 4), and then, unaccountably to human foresight, cutting down the pride of the Assyrian in accordance with his word (v. 5), was to result in the acknowledgment of his unique divinity by the people of far off Ethiopia (v. 7); so here his control of the conqueror to work out his plans for his people should bring men from distant lands of the south with the acknowledgment, "Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God" (ch. 45:14). In the knowledge of this his sole deity, the prophet takes his stand at the consummation of these

events of history, and calls upon the escaped of the nations to recognize the senselessness of their trust in idols, and turn from the ends of the earth to Jehovah and be saved (vs. 20-22). Was it a conception too vast to be thought of in a day when Assyria seemed to control the destinies of Israel and the world? Not for him who said, "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:7).

IV. The Servant of Jehovah and Salvation for Scattered Israel and the Nations.

We have seen how, during this period we are studying, captives of Israel and Judah had become scattered by deportation and colonization into many lands. Their presence in Babylon and the surrounding territory was also shown to be extremely probable, as a result of Assyrian campaigns involving Palestine and Babylonia. We are now in position to introduce evidence of a more positive character. If the difficulty of accepting chs. 40ff as belonging to Isaiah has been removed, allusions in them to exiles in Babylon may be accepted as proof of their presence there at this time. This is made clear by references, like Isa. 47:6, to their afflictions in that city, and by the summons to go forth thence from their bondage (ch. 48:20). Another fact goes to prove the same thing, and also confirms our conclusion as to the date of these chapters. This is that the captivity pictured in the latter part of Isaiah is entirely different from that under Nebuchadnezzar as described by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. As we learn from Jer. 29, the exiles under Nebuchadnezzar, with the exception of a few agitators who were severely dealt with, had some community life, enjoyed the privilege of possessing their own houses and gardens, and appear to have been comparatively well treated. The same is true of conditions as reflected in the book of Ezekiel. But in Isaiah all is different. Many of them were bound in prisons (49:9; 42:7, 22); many knew the fury of the oppressor (51:13, 14; 52:5); Babylon had shown no mercy, but upon the aged had heavily laid her yoke (47:6). With these may be compared the reference in ch. 14:3 to the sorrow and trouble and

hard service of Babylon, as well as that in ch. 27:13 to those who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria and those who were outcasts in the land of Egypt. When we consider the distresses of the remnant who survived the horrors of Sennacherib's campaign, and add to this the fact that many of the people of Judah and Jerusalem had relatives enduring this hard servitude in places from which they could receive no tidings of them, the prophet's characterization of Jerusalem as one "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted" (54:11), and as one that had "drunk at the hand of Jehovah the cup of his wrath" (51:17), will not appear too strong.

In the midst of these conditions we may think of the opening words of ch. 40, having been uttered: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God." Jerusalem had been spared; the king had been raised up from an apparently fatal illness; and with this Jehovah had pledged security for his people for the period of his lengthened life. It was a time to speak comfortably to Jerusalem and cry to her that her warfare had been accomplished and her iniquity pardoned (v. 2). And yet we must not think of the people of Jerusalem as all belonging to this class who sorely needed consolation. We have seen reason to believe that another part of the population were unchastened by their calamities and in danger of being carried away by the seductions of idolatry. The question now arises as to the proper interpretation of this chapter. It has been customary, with the thought of the Babylonia exile as the background, to say that the prophet pictures Jehovah leading back his captive people through the desert to their home, while the herald cries, "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah." But it is a noteworthy fact that John the Baptist, who got the keynote of his ministry from this passage, applied the words to the removal of moral obstacles from the way, in order that the Lord might come to his people with blessings of salvation. There are some things which indicate this as the more probable interpretation here. This idea of removing moral obstacles is presented in similar language in Isa. 57:14. It is also the foundation of that superb passage

in ch. 59, where Jehovah, in order to clear away the gross corruption which hinders and delays redemption, and wondering that there is none to interpose, clothes himself with the garments of vengeance, and by his own arm brings salvation, promising that a Redeemer shall come to Zion and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob (59:15-20). We should then have here, not an ideal picture, poetic in its beauty, of glad tidings of redemption and restoration proclaimed in a land that had long lain desolate without city and temple; but a real message announced to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah: "Behold your God! Behold the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one" (vs. 9, 10). We need not think of the good tidings of a deliverance which has already dawned for them; that would spread like wild-fire. The counsel to lift up the voice with strength and be not afraid implies that, while it is a message none the less gracious in its potentiality, it will fall on unbelieving ears, as well as kindle a new hope in the hearts of the languishing. Such were the conditions amidst which a greater message of glad tidings afterward had to make its way in the days of John and of Jesus. So the prophet's message is one of divine deliverance: Jehovah will come with salvation for his people, and will feed his flock like a shepherd. He dwells upon the incomparable greatness of Jehovah (vs. 12-17); the idols of the nations are not to be compared with him who sits on high (vs. 18-26). Israel is discouraged, dispirited, but is summoned to wait for him who "fainteth not, neither is weary," and in this waiting to gain renewed strength (vs. 27-31). With this background for the preaching of the prophet, we may turn our attention to some of the great ideas proclaimed.

(I) One of these is that there is to be an exodus of Israelites from the countries whither they have been scattered like the former exodus from Egypt. There is one notable passage of this kind in the first part of the book (Isa. 11:10-12:6). The Lord will "set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people" from many lands, and will gather the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah from the ends of the earth

(ch. 11:11, 12). With his scorching wind the Euphrates shall be dried up, so that men may cross over it in sandals, and a highway shall be prepared for the remnant of his people that remain from Assyria (vs. 15, 16). Then we have a reminiscence of the song of Moses at the crossing of the Red Sea in the song of thanksgiving of the restored people in ch. 12. If Isaiah was the author of this passage, he was also the author of the latter part of the book, or someone who was thoroughly permeated with his idea, for we find it there woven into the very warp. So prominent is it that it becomes one of the key thoughts for the understanding of chs. 40-66. Thus in speaking of deliverance from Babylon Jehovah characterizes himself as one who "maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters" (ch. 43:16). In coming forth from that city they are to proclaim their redemption, and how on their journey through the deserts the waters are made to flow out of the rock for their thirst (48:20, 21). Chiding the people for their lack of response to his promises of deliverance, Jehovah again declares his power in words that call up the wonders of old: "Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness" (50:2). In a moment of yearning for deliverance the arm of the Lord is entreated to awake as in the days of old when it "cut Rahab in pieces," and made "the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over" (51:9, 10). In allusion to the pillar of cloud and fire, Jehovah in their march is to go before them and the God of Israel to be their rearward (52:12). Again the ancient days are recalled when God "caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses" (63:12). Besides direct allusions like these, there are also many suggestive parallels, such as the question, in face of what seemed insuperable obstacles, whether Jehovah's hand was shortened (Isa. 50:2 with Num. 11:23); the frustrating of the signs of the liars (Isa. 44:25) compared with the discomfiture of the magicians of Egypt (Ex. 8:18, 19); the going into captivity of Bel and Nebo (Isa. 46:1, 2) and Jehovah's executing judgments against the gods of Egypt (Num. 33:4).

It is easy to see why the herald of such a deliverance

is admonished to lift up the voice and be not afraid. Moses had said, when it was a question of the release of an already numerous people from one nation that held them in bondage, "But, behold, they will not believe me" (Ex. 4:1). Now they were scattered throughout many nations, with little opportunity of coming in touch with each other and cherishing even the hope of release, and yet their brethren of the remnant left in Judah were asked to believe that divine power would gather them again to their own land. Jehovah would "say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the end of the earth" (ch. 43:6). These should come from far, and these from the north and west, and these from the land of Sinim (49:12). This is the "new thing" which Jehovah would do; the former things were not to be remembered, so much greater and more glorious was this deliverance to be than that of old (ch. 43:18, 19). It is evident that the frequent allusions to the mighty works connected with the coming out of Egypt were intended to awaken faith in those who were saying, "My way is hid from Jehovah, and the justice due to me is passed away from my God" (ch. 40:27). Zion was saying, "Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me" (ch. 49:14). She must be made to lift up her eyes and behold her children coming again to her, and to believe that she should yet clothe herself with them as with an ornament, and that her land which had been destroyed should yet be too strait for its inhabitants (vs. 18-21).

(II) Another of the prominent features connected with the prophet's teaching in this part of the book has reference to the servant of Jehovah, through whom this deliverance is to be mediated. It is sometimes said that the conqueror described in ch. 45 is the external agent of Israel's restoration, while the servant of Jehovah is the character more intimately connected with the consummation of the divine purpose for Israel and the world. We have seen reason to doubt whether this conqueror is considered at all in the character of the deliverer, but only as God's instrument for carrying out certain of his

purposes for his people. The picture given us of the servant of Jehovah is in every way a remarkable one. The principal passages which deal with this subject are chs. 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-9; and 52:13-53:12, with a few other minor references. Much discussion has been given to the question as to who the servant is. Many scholars contend that Israel is always and everywhere meant. It is possible that he is considered as fulfilling the ideal of what Israel's calling should be; but the conception is too personal to be identified with the people, and besides he is represented as having for part of his mission the restoration of Israel (ch. 49:6). He is called to a larger and wider ministry than this, the bringing of light to the nations and salvation to the end of the earth, but the relation in which he stands to the covenant people is equally clear (cf. 42:6).

In the light of what we have seen as to the close connection in the prophet's thought between this new redemption and that belonging to the days of the Exodus, it is difficult to resist the impression that we have here a parallel between the servant of Jehovah and Moses. There is no artificial, studied comparison; possibly in most cases no conscious allusion; but the same ideas are frequently found to be prominent in the two characters. His mission is the release of captives and the gathering of Israel as was that of Moses (ch. 42:7; 49:5); he is the giver of *tôrāh,* "law," or "teaching," as was Moses (42:4); the enduement of the divine Spirit is a prominent characteristic of each (42:1 with Num. 11:17, 25); the meekness of Moses is recalled by what is said of the absence of the spectacular in his ministry (42:2 with Num. 12:3); the career of each was marked by a crisis when defeat seemed near (49:4 with Num. 11:14, 15), but both persisted through discouragement to the fulfillment of their mission (42:4 with Deut. 31:6); the servant is given the tongue of them that are taught, as Moses was promised that Jehovah would be with his mouth and teach him what he should speak (50:4 with Ex. 4:12); the greatness of the two characters is made the subject of special mention (52:13; 49:7 with Ex. 11:3). These points of re-

semblance may possibly be regarded as fanciful; but the way in which the servant in his fullest portraiture is introduced at ch. 52:13, immediately after the mention of the going out from exile, confirms the view that he occupies the position of leader of the second exodus. The same is true of 49:1-13; and 50:4-9 follows a passage dealing with the subject of redemption from captivity, and in language strongly colored by the deliverance from Egypt. It is really not surprising that the words of Moses in Deut. 18:15, about the prophet whom Jehovah would raise up like unto him, are in the New Testament taken literally, and not merely of the institution of the office of prophet (Acts 3:22).

We may now turn to the examination of Isa. 48:14-16, which was deferred at an earlier part of the discussion. Reasons will be given for believing that this passage does not deal with the conqueror of ch. 45, but with the servant of Jehovah. It is admitted on all hands that the construction is difficult and the apparent change of speakers confusing; but certain things seem to point toward the interpretation mentioned. In the first place, there is no sufficient evidence that a conqueror is thought of here. The words "he whom," in v. 14, are supplied in translation; the Hebrew runs literally as given in the original Revised Version and in the margin of the American Revision: "Who among them (about 40 MSS., 'among you') hath declared these things? Jehovah hath loved him." The following statement, "shall perform his pleasure on Babylon," can be understood equally well as referring to Jehovah himself. As an expression of his love just mentioned toward someone, Jehovah will perform his pleasure on Babylon. The phrase "his arm," in connection with avenging judgment, is far more naturally referred to Jehovah's arm. Passages almost without number, from Exodus 15:16 down, and especially in Isaiah, refer to his arm as displayed in the punishment of enemies and the salvation of Israel (Isa. 30:30; 51:9; 52:10; 53:1, etc.). Again, many have perceived that the closing words of v. 16, "And now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit," are a kind of prelude to

ch. 49, in which the servant of Jehovah appears as speaker and declares his mission. Moreover, the language of the verses under consideration agrees with what is said elsewhere of the servant of Jehovah. With the statement that Jehovah has loved him we may compare that in ch. 42:1, where he is called "my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth." That Jehovah should be represented as loving a conqueror, whose distinguishing characteristic is that he forcibly takes possession of the lands and cities of other nations, would probably never have been entertained but for the association of the idea with Cyrus as a deliverer of the covenant people. Then, too, with the words "I have called him," in v. 15, agrees the declaration of the servant himself in ch. 49:1, "Jehovah hath called me from the womb"; with the assertion that, "he shall make his way prosperous," agrees ch. 53:10, where it is said that, "the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand"; and with Jehovah's sending him endowed with the Spirit (v. 16), agrees the statement of 42:1, "I have put my Spirit upon him." In any case the mention of the servant in v. 14 is no more vague and abrupt than would be that of the conqueror. The passage by its frequent admonitions to "hear" (vs. 1, 12, 14, 16) seems to be preparing the way for ch. 49, the formal announcement by the servant of his divinely appointed calling. The somewhat reserved way in which he is first alluded to in v. 14, may be accounted for by the unpopularity and contempt which the idea of such a deliverer had met in certain quarters. He had been first introduced in ch. 42:1-9; but in each succeeding description of him the contempt and opposition of the people are mentioned. He is the one whom "man despiseth" and the "nation abhorreth" (49:7); he hides not his face from "shame and spitting" (50:6); he is "despised and rejected of men" (53:3). For these reasons it seems best to regard the servant of Jehovah as the one who declares these things, which none among the people had declared (v. 14); whom Jehovah loves, and whom he will attend with the power of his arm and the enduement of his Spirit, in order that his mission may be prosperously fulfilled.

Returning from the digression on the interpretation of Isa. 48:14-16, it will now be of interest to inquire more particularly as to the person of the servant of Jehovah. Who is he? We need not ask in whom these prophetic declarations found fulfillment. Most evangelical scholars would agree with the writers of the New Testament that they foreshadowed Him who came in the fullness of the time. But what did the prophet have in mind? We have seen that the reference to Israel is unsatisfactory. It may be impossible to say whether there was any person in his day to whom his faith turned as a possible fulfillment of the idea revealed to him (cf. Isa. 7:14). It may have been a composite idea, based upon the experience of those who had wrought and suffered for Israel's welfare in the past, but idealized so as to bring out the prophet's conception of the coming One, through whom God would bring about the new deliverance. However this may be, he has given us one of the noblest conceptions in the Old Testament. Though Moses, the leader of the first exodus, was probably present to his mind, we have here the picture of One who is worthy of more glory than Moses (Heb. 3:3). He is chosen of Jehovah and endued with his Spirit (ch. 42:1); he has been given a mission wider than that to his own nation (49:6); he is to follow out this mission in the spirit of a martyr (50:6). More than this, he is to die in pursuance of his divine calling, bearing the penalty of the sins of those it was his to deliver (ch. 53). But his days are to be prolonged and he is to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied in the accomplishment of his mission of redemption (53:10-12). Some have asserted that there is no connection between the prophet's idea of the servant of Jehovah and that of the king of the line of David. But if we are correct in regarding him as the leader of a new deliverance, as Moses was of the old, Isa. 11:10 furnishes the point of connection between the two ideas. There it is the "root of Jesse" who is to be the ensign for the gathering of the peoples for this new redemption which the prophet proceeds immediately to describe. It is true that in the latter part

of the book the figure of the servant has overshadowed that of the king. The Assyrian crisis was past, and Judah's king was now a subject of Assyria. This may account for the predominance of the other conception; the burning issue was now that of deliverance for the dispersed captives. But no doubt, in the prophet's own thought, these Messianic ideas had all an inner connection: the King of the line of David, Immanuel, the Prince of the Four Names, and the Servant of Jehovah, were one, and their mission was one.

(III) It will be well in bringing this chapter to a close to consider one other of the great ideas emphasized in the prophet's teaching during this remarkable period. It is that the deliverance to which he looks forward is to issue in a final glorious state for Zion and all peoples who turn to her God. This idea is not peculiar to the second part of the book. It is found in the very first chapter, where the prophet beholds the degenerate city purged and restored, so that it shall be called the city of righteousness (1:24-26). Again he has a vision of the latter days, when the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established at the head of the mountains, and shall attract thither all nations, who under the teaching and administration of Israel's God shall come to universal peace (2:2-4). The redeemed city is to be overshadowed day and night by the cloud and fire of the divine presence (4:5), and under the just rule of one who shall come forth out of the stock of Jesse even the natural antagonisms of the animal world shall be subdued, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord (11:6-9). When God shall come with vengeance for the deliverance of his people, nature shall be transformed, physical infirmities done away, and the redeemed shall come with everlasting joy to Zion (ch. 35). In the latter part of the book this vision becomes even more glorious, as seen on the dark background of a wasted land and the sorrows of the captives. The afflicted city is to arise from desolation and dust and clothe herself in beautiful garments, while the waste places sing (51:17-52:10). It is to be rebuilt in beauty, with pinnacles of rubies and

all its border of precious stones; and its people, taught of Jehovah, shall abide in peace and righteousness without fear of the oppressor (54:11-17). Out of the darkness of the surrounding world Zion is to arise and shine, while the riches of the nations shall be turned unto her (ch. 60). New heavens and a new earth are to be created, Jerusalem is to be created a joy and her people a rejoicing, and the voice of sorrow is to be forever hushed (65:17-19).

In these glowing prophetic descriptions the conception seems to outgrow time and take hold on eternity. The images used in the portrayal of glorified Zion in ch. 60 are taken up by the seer in the Apocalypse, and appear again in his vision of the new Jerusalem which comes down from God out of heaven (Rev. 21). There is a danger that we misinterpret these passages by trying to confine them within the limits of the natural world as at present constituted. Much in them concerns what we have been accustomed to refer to the eternal age. Heaven for the prophets was not sharply marked off as an order different from the present, but appeared as a sunlit range just back of the foothills of time. For the Hebrew seers not even thinly did the veil intervene between that world and ours. Attention has frequently been called to the picture so often found in Isaiah of a kind of miraculous highway through the deserts for the return of the ransomed to Zion. But it may be said that it is represented as miraculous because it was never intended to be understood only of an actual, literal return. The prophet was thinking of the eternal, glorified Zion, to which one day peoples from all nations should find their way. The period which we are considering, with all of its sorrows and discouragements and dangerous tendencies, must have been in many respects a glorious one. It was a day when Isaiah preached restoration for scattered Israel and a gathering of the nations to be partakers in Zion's glory; and when he and Hezekiah may be thought of as bending all their energies to awaken faith in the discouraged remnant, and prepare the way for a manifestation of Jehovah's salvation. But the result of this intense activity must be deferred to the closing chapter.

V. The Question of Fulfillment.

It may be that the sequel of what we have supposed to be a period of glowing visions and transcendent hope will seem to some a stumbling-block in the way of accepting the foregoing conclusions. A night of half a century under Manasseh's idolatrous reign closed down on the efforts of Isaiah and Hezekiah. There was a brief awakening under Josiah, and then a rapid descent toward the new carrying away by the Chaldeans. Did Isaiah preach a forlorn hope, and was his vision of a regathering of scattered Israel only the fabric of a dream? It is well to remember that there are difficulties connected with the question of fulfillment under any hypothesis. As we shall show, the theory of modern critics that chs. 40-55 are the work of an exilic prophet is beset with difficulties as to fulfillment. Moreover, the view we are advocating preserves all which could be claimed in this regard for that held by conservative scholars. In due time Cyrus arose as the same kind of conqueror described by Isaiah, and gave commandment concerning the restoration of the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple. Nothing is sacrificed, and there is in addition a decided gain in the removal of the difficulty connected with the manner in which Cyrus was supposed to be foretold. There are now some other matters that remain to be discussed which may throw light upon the whole question of fulfillment.

(I) One of these has reference to the fate predicted for the city of Babylon. Those who referred the prophecies of the downfall of the city in the latter part of the book to the Chaldean age and the conquest by Cyrus naturally, as a rule, assigned that of chs. 13, 14 to the same time, although this is preceded by a title ascribing it to Isaiah the son of Amoz. There has been more hesitation regarding that found in ch. 21:1-10, some critics who refer the others to the later date considering this as belonging to the Assyrian period. But these prophecies found no satisfactory fulfillment in the taking of the city by Cyrus. Under the old view which has come down from Herodotus, that there was a long and difficult siege, and that the city was finally captured by the turn-

ing of the waters of the Euphrates into another channel, the historical event seemed, in a measure at least, to correspond with the prediction. The contemporary monumental accounts, however, both that of Nabonidus and of Cyrus himself, assert that Babylon was entered without fighting. The priests appear to have spread disaffection among the people, because of dislike of the religious policy of Nabonidus, so that the new conqueror was accepted without resistance and the inhabitants for the most part lived contentedly under his rule. In contrast with this peaceful victory the prophecies are lurid with pictures of ruin and desolation (Isa. 13:19-22; 47:1-3). It does not altogether satisfy our ideas as to the meaning of the language used, when the significance of the fall of Babylon is pointed out as the end of Semitic rule and the beginning of the Indo-European. No doubt it was a momentous event, an epoch in the world's history, when looked at in that light by the modern historian; but to the people of that day it assuredly did not appear a destruction sudden and complete such as the prophet describes.

In view of this lack of harmony between the event predicted and its supposed fulfillment, it is well to examine an earlier capture of Babylon. Little attention seems to have been given to the possibility of referring these prophecies to the destruction of the city under Sennacherib. After his campaign in Palestine he turned his attention to Babylonia, and put down the revolt in which, as we have seen, Merodach-baladan was again involved. He had his own son, Ashur-nadin-shum, proclaimed king, and for the next six years this part of the empire was under his rule (R. II, 374f). But this new experiment was no more successful than others had been. Having ignored or antagonized the Babylonians from the beginning of his reign, other revolts against Assyrian rule were inevitable. After some changes, a Chaldean by the name of Mushezib-Marduk was made king in 693 B. C., and so intense was the opposition to Assyria that his rule had the support of the native Babylonians, who had formerly been hostile to the Chaldeans. The Elamites

also, with other peoples, were won over as allies, and a tremendous battle was fought in 691 by Sennacherib against this confederacy, and one in which it is thought his army must have lost heavily, if indeed he gained the victory at all (R. II, 379f). But the end of this long course of revolt might have been foreseen. Sennacherib, determined on vengeance, again invaded the country in 689 and Babylon was completely destroyed.

Let us see whether there are any serious objections to assigning the prophecies to this event. Much has been made of the refernce to the Medes in ch. 13:17. But here nothing is said of the Median civilization overwhelming and succeeding to the place of power formerly held by the Babylonian, that the conquest should be identified with that of Cyrus. The picture given in the beginning of the chapter is that of a multitude of nations mustered for battle (vs. 2-4), just what would have been true of the Assyrian army with its contingents of troops from all the provinces of the empire. Detachments of Elamites and the people of Kir are mentioned among the forces warring against Jerusalem (ch. 22:6). Sargon had colonized captives from Israel in the cities of the Medes (2 Ki. 17:6), and hence this land must have been a part of the Assyrian empire, furnishing its quota of soldiers for the imperial army. The Medes are mentioned here, not as the bulk of the army which is about to attack Babylon, but as a type of barbaric warriors not easily bought off by the attractions of wealth and civilization. The reference to the Chaldeans may also be explained by the fact that a king of that race had ruled over Babylon for a considerable period during the days of Isaiah; and in the last years before its destruction another who, as we have seen, had the loyal support of the native Babylonians. That the city should be called "daughter of the Chaldeans" (47:1), and "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride" (13:19), ought not, in the light of the wealth, culture and importance of the place and the ascendancy of Chaldean influence at this time, to necessitate a reference to the days of the new empire built up by Nabuchadnezzar. Again, the vindictiveness of

ch. 14, as expressing exultation over a fallen foe, has been pointed out as inconsistent with the position occupied by Babylon in Isaiah's day. This seems to have been greatly exaggerated. There is nothing comparable to the exultation of Nahum over the fall of Nineveh, or to Habakkuk's intense feeling against the Chaldeans. There is not the same detestation which we find in prophecies of judgment upon the Assyrian in such passages as Isa. 33:1 and 30: 27-33. In fact the tone of ch. 14 seems to be rather that of astonishment over the tremendous and complete humiliation of the once haughty power. What of feeling is displayed by the prophet against Babylon is easily explained by the fact that multitudes of his own countrymen were there enduring oppression. In ch. 21:3-4 there is evidence of dismay and horror over the approaching calamity, which is probably to be accounted for by the fear of the speaker that the destruction of the city means added distress for the captives.

When now we consider the vengeance taken by Sennacherib on this place the prophet's descriptions seem to be amply justified. One of the chief features of his portrayal had been the horror and completeness of the doom predicted. It is likened to a day of Jehovah (v. 6ff), attended by supernatural terrors (v. 10), a kind of forerunner of the last judgment upon the world for its evil (v. 11). The population are to be scattered as "sheep that no man gathereth," so that they may turn everyone to his own land (v. 14), and the site of the city is to be a perpetual desolation (v. 19ff). Ch. 14:4ff is a powerful description of the ancient might and glory of Babylon brought down in impotence to Sheol. Chapter 47 pictures the humiliation of the daughter of the Chaldeans, who shall come down from her throne into the dust of servitude (v. 1ff). The judgment is to come suddenly, so that "in a moment in one day" shall be visited upon her "loss of children and widowhood" (v. 9). All her enchantments and her wise men upon whom she has relied shall be as stubble before the flame of her conflagration, which "shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before" (vs. 12-14). In the light of these predictions of the fate

of Babylon we may give the following quotation from Rogers (II, 381) as to the work of Sennacherib in its destruction: "It was plundered, its inhabitants driven from their homes or deported, its walls broken down. The torch was then applied, and over the plain rolled the smoke of consuming temples and palaces, the fruit of centuries of high civilization. All that the art of man had up to that time devised of beauty and of glory, of majesty and of massiveness, lay in one great smoldering ruin. Over this the waters of the Euphrates were diverted that the site of antiquity's greatest city might be turned into a pestilential swamp."

(II) Another matter of interest concerns the fulfillment of the prophet's visions of the return of the captives. We may not say absolutely that this hope remained wholly unrealized even in that day. Thirtle in his *Old Testament Problems* maintained that there was a return during this period. And there are some evidences, when once the latter part of the book is accepted as belonging to Isaiah, that many found their way back to the home land. In ch. 56:8 there is a prediction that Jehovah who gathers the outcasts of Israel will yet gather others to those that are gathered. The destruction of Babylon, with the fleeing of its population every man to his own land (ch. 13:14), may have resulted in the escape from bondage of many Israelites. Chapter 60 might be a glorious vision of the future based upon the actual beginning of the exiles to flock homeward in fulfillment of the promise (vs. 4, 8). But without laying further stress on this we may show that, in so far as the promise remained unfulfilled, it was due to the unbelief of the people and the reaction toward idolatry which followed soon afterwards.

A study of the later chapters of Isaiah will make clear what it was that defeated for the time being the gracious purposes of God for Israel, and also furnish additional evidence that this part of the book belongs to the period under consideration. Modern criticism no longer holds that all of chs. 40-66 are the work of one author toward the close of the Babylonian exile. It is now pointed out

that chs. 56-66 reflect the scenery of Palestine and not of Babylonia; and moreover that passages like 56:7, 60:7, 62:9, 65:11, 66:6 show that the temple and its services were in existence. While most of the advanced scholars refer the chapters in question to postexilic days, little objection to accepting them as the genuine prophecies of Isaiah will be felt by those who hold to his authorship of chs. 40-55. There are several passages in which the prophet denounces the prevailing idolatry, the chief of which are 57:3-13; 65:3-7, 11; 66:3, 17, and the forms described bear a strong resemblance to those recorded of Manasseh's reign, or the years immediately preceding. For example, in 57:3 the apostates are called sons of the "sorceress," the same word being used as that in 2 Ki., 21:6 referring to Manasseh's practice of augury. The idolatrous worship connected with the oaks (terebinths) mentioned in 57:5 is also spoken of in 1:29, which, if it belongs to the same discourse as the first part of the chapter, we have seen reason to refer to the time of Sennacherib's campaign. The frequenting of gardens as the place of these idolatrous customs, according to 65:3 and 66:17, is also mentioned in the earlier passage; and it may be significant of Manasseh's preferences during his lifetime that he, as well as his son Amon, was buried in the garden of his own house, the garden of Uzza (2 Ki. 21:18, 26), as also these places of worship are stated to have been among the graves (Isa. 65:4). Again, the slaying of the children in the valleys (57:5) recalls Manasseh's making his son to pass through the fire (2 Ki. 21:6), as the rite practised in the valley of Hinnom undoubtedly, according to Jer. 7:31, involved human sacrifice. The burning of incense upon the mountains (65:7), may very well refer to the high places built again by Manasseh (2 Ki. 21:3), and the "rabble of idols" mentioned in 57:13 (R. V. margin) would be found nowhere in greater profusion than during his reign. It is not contended that some of these rites did not exist at other times, but their mention in connection with the period we have been studying goes to show that no other date need be sought for these later chapters of Isaiah because of

the peculiar forms of idolatry mentioned. We may suppose that this part of the book belongs to the last years of the prophet, after the death of Hezekiah, to which ch. 57:1, 2 may possibly be an allusion, and after the reaction under Manasseh had gained headway. The bloodshed of the latter's persecutions might then be referred to in such passages as 59:3, 7. The prophet expects deliverance when it comes to be the result of Jehovah's own working, so great is the moral corruption of the time (59:15-20; cf. 63:1-6).

If the moral and religious conditions were such during the closing years of Isaiah's life, we need not be surprised that a larger fulfillment of his glowing predictions did not take place. The purposes of God would not have been subserved by the restoration of his scattered people under such circumstances. There is no diminution of the prophet's faith in Jehovah, only here and there perhaps a trace of discouragement over the obstacles that hinder redemption (cf. ch. 64:1-7). He himself had stated the cause of the delay: Jehovah's hand was not shortened, nor his ear heavy, but their sins had hidden his face so that he would not hear (59:1, 2). Too little attention has been given to the conditional element in prophecy. The prophets were not simply soothsayers, to satisfy the inquisitiveness of men as to the future. They did make definite predictions which came to pass. But they were first of all preachers, and their promises and threats were conditioned upon the response of the people. This was the lesson of Jeremiah's discourse on what he saw at the potter's house (Jer. 18:1-12). If the clay did not respond to the potter's efforts to make it into a certain vessel, he could change his plan and make it into another vessel. The application is clearly stated: Jehovah's threats of judgment are not without recall, but are intended to bring his people to repentance (vs. 7, 8). Neither are his promises, however glorious, to be automatically fulfilled; he may repent of the good which he has spoken, if there is no response to his offers of grace (vs. 9, 10). If much connected with the glorious visions of a return spoken by Isaiah did not come to pass in his day, the reason is

found in the deadly drift toward idolatry under Manasseh.

But there are some who will have less difficulty with a meager fulfillment than with that kind our prophet seems to have expected. Apparently as human hopes were disappointed he turned more to the idea of salvation by divine power: Jehovah would come and by a display of his might execute judgment and bring in redemption (66:15ff). We are told that the age of apocalyptic visions had not yet come in the days of Isaiah. Two things may be said in reply. One is that wherever there is suffering and oppression and hopelessness of relief from any human quarter, conjoined with such a belief in Jehovah's sovereignty and power as the prophet had, there are all the conditions present which give rise to this form of prophetic vision. The other is that if we should attempt to eliminate all apocalyptic passages from the book we should have left an Isaiah who had dwindled beyond recognition. That is precisely what has happened to the Isaiah of modern criticism. We have the keen, clear-headed statesman, scanning the movements on the political horizon, and giving counsel to kings, all of which he was; but the man of faith and hope, the preacher of a gospel of God's grace and power, has been largely obscured. The delivering of such a message of restoration as we have supposed the prophet proclaimed is no more than is contained in the book of Deuteronomy (cf. ch. 30:1-5), which even upon the critical hypothesis must have been in existence about this period. If Isaiah was not granted in that day a realization of his visions, he was only one of the long line of God's messengers who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar" (Heb. 11:13).

(III) It may be well in closing this study to give some attention to the question whether we may look for a further fulfillment of the prophet's visions. The return under Zerubbabel was pitifully small, and the experience of the liberated exiles disapointing, when placed over against Isa. 60. It is not the purpose here to go into a discussion of the return of the Jews to Palestine. Some

promises are delayed in their fulfillment and come to pass ages after. Some may be delayed through the unresponsiveness and unbelief of God's people until their literal fulfillment would be an anachronism. It is difficult to see how the literal coming to pass of some of the ancient prophecies would fit into the present age. It would require us to believe in a regathering to the Holy Land of Jews from all the nations; and not only this, but a coming of all peoples to be partakers in their blessings. We should have to think of a rebuilding of the temple and a reinstitution of the sacrifices after the former manner. When once the substance to which these things looked forward has come, that which is but a shadow can have no more meaning. Paul held firmly to a belief in Israel's salvation as a nation (Rom. 11:26), but he is silent as to a return of his countrymen to their own land.

But there is a larger and more glorious fulfillment which has been going on and is still in progress. The Israel of faith is of wider significance than that according to the flesh (Rom. 9:6-8); there is a "Jerusalem that now is," and a "Jerusalem that is above" (Gal. 4:25-27); Zion is no longer the hill of which psalmists have sung, but the everlasting home of the faithful of all peoples (Heb. 12:22). He whose glory Isaiah saw and of whom he spoke (Jn. 12:41) has come and unto him the nations are gathering (Isa. 11:10). The miraculous highway is still trodden by people of all countries, but its destination is the city of Isa. 60, whose light is no more that of the sun but the glory of God. "And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Date Due

FEB 18 '66

OCT 7 1978

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
0 0021 0022757 4

224.1011
D748

Downer, Benjamin Rene
AUTHOR

The added years of Hezekiah's life.
TITLE

N10925

224.1011
D748 Downer, Benjamin Reno
The added years of Hezekiah's life.

N10925